

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 ACDA-12 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 NEA-10 HA-05 AF-10 /119 W
-----034009 091707Z /40

R 091519Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8789
INFO USDOC WASHDC

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USDOC FOR BEWT

E.O.11652:GDS
TAGS:PARM, SHUM, ECON, EEW, UR, US, XF, XA
SUBJECT: GYORGIY ARBATOV ON US-SOVIET RELATIONS

SUMMARY: DURING ONE HOUR AND FORTY-FIVE MINUTE MEETING
MARCH 7 WITH FIVE RESIDENT AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN AND
EMBASSY E/C COUNSELOR, USA/CANADA INSTITUTE DIRECTOR
GYORGIY ARBATOV MADE FOLLOWING NOTEWORTHY OBSERVATIONS ON
US-SOVIET RELATIONS WHILE RELATING IMPRESSIONS OF RECENT
VISIT TO U.S.:

-- US/SOVIET RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE POSITIVE BUT FOR
INTERNAL SITUATION IN U.S., WHICH CAUSES CARTER ADMINIS-
TRATION TO MOVE WITH EXTREME CAUTION;

-- USG SHOULD EDUCATE AMERICAN PEOPLE MORE ABOUT SALT BUT
FAILS TO DO SO, PERHAPS FOR FEAR OF LOSING BARGAINING
CHIPS; RECENT USG REVELATION THAT SOVIETS HAVE ABIDED BY
SALT 1 WAS HELPFUL BUT MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE;

-- THE COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY COULD BE SIGNED NOW,
SINCE SOVIETS HAVE CHANGED STAND ON PNE'S, BUT THE
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ADMINISTRATION "SCRATCHES ITS HEAD;"

-- HE, PERSONALLY, BELIEVES PRESIDENT DID NOT KNOW IN
ADVANCE ABOUT SADAT'S DEMARCHE TO ISRAEL - "OTHERWISE, HOW
COULD HE HAVE APPROVED JOINT US-SOVIET DECLARATION?" - BUT
CIA MIGHT HAVE KNOWN;

-- SOVIET ACTION IN HORN OF AFRICA, ABOUT WHICH PONOMAREV DELEGATION HEARD "SOME AWFUL THINGS," WAS NOT PART OF SOVIET MASTER PLAN BUT WAS A "SITUATION TO WHICH SOVIETS HAD RESPONDED."

-- HE WAS PERSUADED THAT THERE COULD BE NO CHANGE IN JACKSON/VANIK AMENDMENT THIS YEAR DUE TO (A) POLITICAL SITUATION IN U.S. AND (B) TIDE OF PROTECTIONISM IN U.S. WHICH THOUGH DIRECTED AT JAPAN, MAKES AMENDMENT OF TRADE LEGISLATION UNTIMELY.

-- PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN USSR WOULD NOT HELP US-SOVIET RELATIONS; WHEN ONE CASE IS SOLVED, US RAISES A NEW ONE; "WE'LL NEVER SATISFY YOU;"

-- SOVIETS FIND AMERICANS "NOT THE MOST LIKEABLE PARTNERS" IN A DIALOGUE, WORSE THAN WEST GERMANS, BUT WE ARE SHACKLED TOGETHER BY EVENTS WE CANNOT CONTROL;

-- AFTER ONE YEAR HE CANNOT EVALUATE PRESIDENT CARTER, BUT IF THINGS DO NOT CHANGE, IT WILL BE BAD FOR THE U.S.

END SUMMARY.

1. ARBATOV, WHO WAS FLANKED BY USA/CANADA INSTITUTE OFFICIALS SHERSHNEV, IVANYAN AND BOBRAKOV, RECEIVED US BUSINESSMEN UPON REQUEST OF US/USSR TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT RICHARD O'BRIEN.

CHASE-MANHATTAN, IBM, OCCIDENTAL AND ARTHUR ANDERSON
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REPRESENTATIVES ALSO ATTENDED ON INVITATION BASIS, AND EMBASSY E/C COUNSELOR WAS INCLUDED UPON O'BRIEN'S REQUEST. DISCUSSION INVOLVED SOME GIVE AND TAKE WITH ESPECIALLY CHASE (DAVID BUCKMAN) AND ON ONE OCCASION OXY (DAN GARINE) REPRESENTATIVES SPEAKING UP. DETAILS OF DISCUSSION WILL FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM.

2. ARBATOV STUCK PRIMARILY TO POLITICAL THEMES THROUGHOUT, AS O'BRIEN HAD APPARENTLY REQUESTED. HE DID MENTION "WARM" (I.E. CORDIAL) ATMOSPHERE OF UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION SESSION IN NEW YORK WHERE ROBERT ROOSA AND OTHER RANKING AMERICAN BUSINESS FIGURES APPARENTLY CONVINCED HIM THAT DUE TO POLITICAL PROBLEMS AND RISING DANGER OF PROTECTIONISM IN U.S., THERE WAS NO CHANCE TO REVISE JACKSON/VANIK AMENDMENT THIS YEAR (DESPITE VANIK'S OWN FERVENT DISASSOCIATION FROM IT IN TALK WITH ARBATOV). ARBATOV PEDDLED SOFT KEY THE FLATTERING LINE THAT BUSINESSMEN ARE BETTER INFORMED ABOUT USSR AND MORE REALISTIC THAN POLITICIANS, BUT IF HIS INTERLOCUTORS WERE MUCH IMPRESSED, THEY DID NOT SHOW IT.

3. ARBATOV STUCK TO THEME THROUGHOUT DISCUSSION THAT ONLY

U.S. IS TO BLAME FOR PRESENT STATE OF U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS, WHICH COULD BE POSITIVE BUT FOR EXCESSIVE CONCERN BY CARTER ADMINISTRATION ABOUT WHAT IT PERCEIVES TO BE AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT USSR. HE STATED AT OUTSET THAT HIS IMPRESSIONS OF U.S., JUDGING BY RECENT PRESS ARTICLES, MIGHT ALREADY BE OUTDATED. FOR EXAMPLE, HE HAD NEVER HEARD ANYONE IN U.S. CALL SALT II "IMPOSSIBLE" TO RATIFY, BUT HE WAS LESS SURE OF THAT NOW. ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT MENTION WORD LINKAGE, HE ARGUED STRONGLY THAT U.S. SHOULD NOT PERMIT OTHER ISSUES TO INFLUENCE ITS ATTITUDE ON SIGNATURE

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SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 NEA-10 HA-05 AF-10 /119 W

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R 091519Z MAR 78

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OF A SALT AGREEMENT. IF DETENTE DID NOT GO FORWARD, HE WARNED, THERE WOULD BE RETROGRESSION, SINCE IT COULD NO MORE MARK TIME THAN COULD A BICYCLE BALANCE WITHOUT FORWARD MOTION.

4. ARBATOV SAID THAT VALUE OF PONOMAREV TRIP HAD BEEN TO BROADEN PERSPECTIVES OF SOME CONGRESSMEN, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT CLAIM IT HAD CHANGED THEIR VIEWS. SINCE ENTIRE ARBATOV PRESENTATION SUGGESTED ONE-SIDED EDUCATIONAL PROCESS, COUNSELOR INQUIRED IF SOVIETS, TOO, HAD LEARNED FROM THE ENCOUNTER. ARBATOV REPLIED THAT THEY HAD COME AWAY WITH SOME "NEW UNDERSTANDING." WHEN ARBATOV WAS MAKING SKEPTICAL MENTION OF ADMINISTRATION'S CLAIM IT HAD NO FOREKNOWLEDGE OF ORIGINAL SADAT INITIATIVE, COUNSELOR INQUIRED IF "SOVIETS" BELIEVED ADMINISTRATION'S STATEMENT. ARBATOV RESPONDED ARTFULLY THAT HE, PERSONALLY, BELIEVES PRESIDENT DID NOT KNOW, FOR OTHERWISE HOW COULD LATTER HAVE POSSIBLY APPROVED JOINT US-SOVIET DECLARATION IN OCTOBER? HOWEVER, CIA MIGHT HAVE KNOWN. ARBATOV MENTIONED "SERIOUS MISTAKES" OF U.S. IN HORN OF AFRICA,

IMPLYING THAT IT HAD ENCOURAGED SOMALI INVASION WHEREAS PONOMAREV HAD WARNED SIAD BARRE ON EVE AGAINST IT. HOW COULD SOMALIS HAVE DARED ATTACK WITHOUT SOME ENCOURAGEMENT, HE WONDERED? ARBATOV ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, WITH FLAT

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"YES" COUNSELOR'S COMMENT THAT SOMALIS HAD BEEN "WELL ARMED."

5. ARBATOV SAID THAT SOVIETS FIND BULGARIANS AND EVEN WEST GERMANS MORE AGGRESSIVE PARTNERS THAN AMERICANS, BUT WE ARE SHACKLED TOGETHER BY FATE. BUCKMAN, ASSERTING THAT HE SPEAKS FRANKLY, TOLD ARBATOV THAT NEITHER CONGRESS NOR MIDDLE AMERICA MAN ON THE STREET COULD BE EXPECTED TO FAVOR RATIFICATION OF SALT AGREEMENT IF SOVIETS HELP ETHIOPIA TAKE OVER HORN OF AFRICA. ARBATOV RESPONDED THAT WHAT HAPPENED IN AFRICA WAS NOT VERY IMPORTANT. IF SALT FAILED, HE INQUIRED, WHAT WOULD BE THE CONSEQUENCES? (HIS IMPLICATION WAS THAT THEY WOULD BE EXCEEDINGLY GRAVE.) HE RECALLED THAT SOVIETS HAD BEEN WILLING TO MEET PRESIDENT NIXON TO REACH AGREEMENT OF STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION EVEN WHEN U.S. WAS "ESCALATING" WAR IN VIETNAM.

6. ARBATOV'S FRANKEST STATEMENTS OF PESSIMISM, HOWEVER, CAME AFTER DAN GARINE OF OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM, WHO IS MARRIED TO A RUSSIAN CITIZEN, MENTIONED IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION IN YAKUTIA GAS BUT ADDED THAT PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN USSR WOULD HELP THE CAUSE. ARBATOV SHOT BACK THAT IT WOULD NOT HELP. WHEN ONE SUCH PROBLEM WAS SOLVED, HE SAID, U.S. FINDS A NEW ONE. A BUKOVSKY IS KICKED OUT, BUT NEW NAMES APPEAR. "WE'LL NEVER (BE ABLE TO) SATISFY YOU," ARBATOV SAID. NOT LARGE, BUT WELL ORGANIZED, GROUPS IN U.S., ACCORDING TO HIM, WERE WORKING ACTIVELY AGAINST BETTER US-SOVIET RELATIONS. HE NOTED INEVITABILITY OF ISSUES ARISING WHICH WILL DIVIDE US BUT ARGUED THAT THIS SHOULD NOT PREVENT AGREEMENT IN OTHER AREAS.

7. AT CLOSE, ARBATOV SAID THAT HE COULD NOT EVALUATE PRESIDENT CARTER AFTER ONE YEAR IN OFFICE. OF COURSE, CONFIDENTIAL

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EISENHOWER, KENNEDY, JOHNSON AND NIXON COULD NOT HAVE BEEN EVALUATED AT THAT POINT EITHER, HE ADDED, BUT HE SAW A DANGER AHEAD FOR U.S. IF IT COULD NOT BEGIN TO SOLVE ITS PROBLEMS. IT WOULD BE BAD FOR THE U.S. IF THINGS DID NOT CHANGE.

8. COMMENT; ARBATOV'S LINE WAS ESSENTIALLY THAT U.S. SHOULD LET NEITHER SOVIET INTERNAL AFFAIRS NOR MINOR DIFFERENCES IN OTHER AREAS OF THE WORLD, SUCH AS MIDDLE EAST OR HORN OF AFRICA, STAND IN THE WAY OF SIGNATURE OF ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS. HE WAS CAREFUL TO SPEAK FOR HIMSELF ONLY, BUT THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT HIS PRESENTATION WAS CAREFULLY REHEARSED. HIS NEGATIVE TONE TOWARDS CARTER ADMINISTRATION WAS LIMITED TO GENERAL THEME THAT IT PAYS UNNECESSARY HEED TO UNINFORMED OR MISINFORMED PUBLIC OPINION. HENCE AMERICANS ARE A VERY DIFFICULT IF ESSENTIAL DISCUSSION PARTNER FOR THE USSR, AND IF THINGS DO NOT IMPROVE, THEY ARE GOING TO GET WORSE. TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BUSINESSMEN, FOREIGN RELATIONS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 mar 1978
Decapton Date: 01 jan 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW04043
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780106-0617
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780388/aaaacwgl.tel
Line Count: 237
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 90734cca-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 feb 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3387951
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GYORGIY ARBATOV ON US-SOVIET RELATIONS SUMMARY: DURING ONE HOUR AND FORTY-FIVE MINUTE MEETING MARCH 7 WITH FIVE RESIDENT AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN AN
TAGS: PARM, SHUM, ECON, EEW, UR, US, XF, XA, (ARBATOV, GYORGIY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/90734cca-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014